New INDIVIDUALIST Review

THE FALLACY OF THE "PUBLIC SECTOR"

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

JOHN WEICHER

TOCQUEVILLE AND THE BLAND LEVIATHAN

ROBERT SCHUETTINGER

• • •

FREEDOM AND COERCION: A REPLY TO MR. HAMOWY

F. A. HAYEK

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The Fallacy of the "Public Sector"

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

WE HAVE HEARD a great deal in recent years of the "public sector," and solemn discussions abound through the land on whether or not the public sector should be increased *vis-a-vis* the "private sector." The very terminology is redolent of pure science, and indeed it emerges from the supposedly scientific, if rather grubby, world of "national income statistics." But the concept is hardly *wertfrei;* in fact, it is fraught with grave, and questionable, implications.

In the first place, we may ask: "public sector" of *what?* Of something called the "national product." But note the hidden assumptions: that the national product is something like a pie, consisting of several "sectors," and that these sectors, public and private alike, are added to make the product of the economy as a whole. In this way, the assumption is smuggled into the analysis that the public and private sectors are equally productive, equally important, and on an equal footing altogether, and that "our" deciding on the proportions of public to private sector is about as innocuous as any individual's decision on whether to eat cake or ice cream. The State is considered to be an amiable service agency, somewhat akin to the corner grocer, or rather to the neighborhood lodge, in which "we" get together to decide how much "our government" should do for (or to) us. Even those neo-classical economists who tend to favor the free market and free society, often regard the State as a generally inefficient, but still amiable, organ of social service, mechanically registering "our" values and decisions.

One would not think it difficult for scholars and laymen alike to grasp the fact that government is *not* like the Rotarians or the Elks; that it differs profoundly from all other organs and institutions in society; namely, that it lives and acquires its revenues by coercion and not by voluntary payment. The late Joseph Schumpeter was never more astute than when he wrote: "The theory which construes taxes on the analogy of club dues or of the purchase of the services of, say, a doctor only proves how far removed this part of the social sciences is from scientific habits of mind."[1]

Apart from the public sector, what constitutes the productivity of the "private sector" of the economy? The productivity of the private sector does not stem from the fact that people are rushing around doing *something,* anything, with their resources; it consists in the fact that they are using these resources to satisfy the needs and desires of the consumers. Businessmen and other producers direct their energies, on the free market, to producing those products which will be most rewarded by the con-

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[1] In the preceding sentences, Schumpeter wrote: "The friction or antagonism between the private and the public sphere was intensified from the first by the fact that . . . the state has been living on a revenue which was being produced in the private sphere for private purposes and had to be deflected from these purposes by political force." Precisely. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1942), p. 198.

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sumers, and the sale of these products may therefore roughly "measure" the importance which the consumers place upon them. If millions of people bend their energies to producing horses-and-buggies, they will, in this day and age, not be able to sell them, and hence the productivity of their output will be virtually zero. On the other hand, if a few million dollars are spent in a given year on Product X, then statisticians may well judge that these millions constitute the productive output of the X-part of the "private sector" of the economy.

ONE OF THE most important features of our economic resources is their scarcity: land, labor, and capital goods factors are all scarce, and may all be put to varied possible uses. The free market uses them "productively" because the producers are guided, on the market, to produce what the consumers most need: automobiles, for example, rather than buggies. Therefore, while the statistics of the total output of the private sector *seem* to be a mere adding of numbers, or counting units of output, the measures of output actually involve the important qualitative decision of considering as "product" what the consumers are willing to buy. A million automobiles, sold on the market, are productive because the consumers so considered them; a million b u g g i e s, remaining unsold, would *not* have been "product" because the consumers would have passed them by.

Suppose now, that into this idyll of free exchange enters the long arm of government. The government, for some reasons of its own, decides to ban automobiles altogether (perhaps because the many tailfins offend the aesthetic sensibilities of the rulers) and to compel the auto companies to produce the equivalent in buggies instead. Under such a strict regimen, the consumers would be, in a sense, compelled to purchase buggies because no cars would be permitted. However, in this case, the statistician would surely be purblind if he blithely and simply recorded the buggies as being just as "productive" as the previous automobiles. To call them equally productive would be a mockery; in fact, given plausible conditions, the "national product" totals might not even show a statistical decline, when they had actually fallen drastically.

And yet the highly-touted "public sector" is in even worse straits than the buggies of our hypothetical example. For most of the resources consumed by the maw of government have not even been seen, much less used, by the consumers, who were at least allowed to ride their buggies. In the private sector, a firm's productivity is gauged by how much the consumers voluntarily spend on its product. But in the public sector, the government's "productivity" is measured — *mirabile dictu*—by how much *it spends!* Early in their construction of national product statistics, the statisticians were confronted with the fact that the government, unique among individuals and firms, could not have its activities gauged by the voluntary payments of the public — because there were little or none of such payments. Assuming, without any proof, that government *must* be as productive as anything else, they then settled upon its expenditures as a gauge of its productivity. In this way, not only are government expenditures just as useful as private, but all the government need to do in order to increase its "productivity" is to add a large chunk to its bureaucracy. Hire more bureaucrats, and see the productivity of the public sector rise! Here, indeed, is an easy and happy form of social magic for our bemused citizens.

The truth is exactly the reverse of the common assumptions. Far from adding cozily to the private sector, the public sector can only feed off the private sector; it necessarily lives parasitically upon the private economy. But this means that the productive resources of society — far from satisfying the wants of consumers — are now directed, by compulsion, *away from* these wants and needs. The consumers are deliberately thwarted, and the resources of the economy diverted from them to those activities desired by the parasitic bureaucracy and politicians. In many cases, the private consumers obtain nothing at all, except perhaps propaganda beamed to them at their own expense. In other cases, the consumers receive something far down

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on their list of priorities — like the buggies of our example. In either case, it becomes evident that the "public sector" is actually *anti*-productive: that it *subtracts from,* rather than adds to, the private sector of the economy. For the public sector lives by continuous attack on the very criterion that is used to gauge productivity: the voluntary purchases of consumers.

We may gauge the fiscal impact of government on the private sector by subtracting government expenditures from the national product. For government payments to its own bureaucracy are hardly additions to production; and government absorption of economic resources takes them out of the productive sphere. This gauge, of course, is only fiscal; it does not begin to measure the anti-productive impact of various government regulations, which cripple production and exchange in other ways than absorbing resources. It also does not dispose of numerous other fallacies of the national product statistics. But at least it removes such common myths as the idea that the productive output of the American economy increased during World War II. Subtract the government deficit instead of add it, and we see that the real productivity of the economy declined, as we would rationally expect during a war.

IN ANOTHER of his astute comments, Joseph Schumpeter wrote, concerning anti-capitalist intellectuals: ". . . capitalism stands its trial before judges who have the sentence of death in their pockets. They are going to pass it, whatever the defense they may hear; the only success victorious defense can possible produce is a change in the indictment."[2] The indictment has certainly been changing. In the 1930's, we heard that government must expand because capitalism had brought about mass poverty. Now, under the aegis of John Kenneth Galbraith, we hear that capitalism has sinned because the masses are too affluent. Where once poverty was suffered by "one third of a nation," we must now bewail the "starvation" of the public sector.

By what standards does Dr. Galbraith conclude that the private sector is too bloated and the public sector too anemic, and therefore that government must exercise further coercion to rectify its own malnutrition? Certainly, his standard is not historical. In 1902, for example, net national product of the United States was $22.1 billion; government expenditure (Federal, state, and local) totalled $1.66 billion or 7.1% of the total product. In 1957, on the other hand, net national product was $402.6 billion, and government expenditures totalled $125.5 billion, or 31.2% of the total product. Government's fiscal depredation on the private product has therefore multiplied from four to five-fold over the present century. This is hardly "starvation" of the public sector. And yet, Galbraith contends that the public sector is being increasingly starved, relative to its status in the non-affluent nineteenth century!

What standards, then, does Galbraith offer us to discover when the public sector will finally be at its optimum? The answer is, nothing but personal whim:

> There will be question as to what is the test of balance — at what point may we conclude that balance has been achieved in the satisfaction of private and public needs. The answer is that no test can be applied, for none exists. . . . The present imbalance is clear. . . . This being so, the direction in which we move to correct matters is utterly plain.[3]

To Galbraith, the imbalance of today is "clear." Clear why? Because he looks around him and sees deplorable conditions wherever government operates. Schools are overcrowded, urban traffic is congested and the streets littered, rivers are polluted; he might have added that crime is increasingly rampant and the courts of justice clogged. All of these are areas of government operation and ownership. The one supposed solution for these glaring defects is to siphon more money into the government till.

[2] Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[3] John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), pp. 320-21.

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But how is it that only *government* agencies clamor for more money and denounce the citizens for reluctance to supply more? Why do we never have the private-enterprise equivalents of traffic jams (which occur on government streets), mismanaged schools, water shortages, etc.? The reason is that private firms acquire the money that they deserve from two sources: voluntary payment for the services by consumers, and voluntary investment by investors in expectation of consumer demand. If there is an increased demand for a privately-owned good, consumers pay more for the product, and investors invest more in its supply, thus "clearing the market" to everyone's satisfaction. If there is an increased demand for a publicly-owned good (water, streets, subway, etc.), all we hear is annoyance at the consumer for wasting precious resources, coupled with annoyance at the taxpayer for balking at a higher tax load. Private enterprise makes it its business to court the consumer and to satisfy his most urgent demands; government agencies denounce the consumer as a troublesome user of their resources. Only a government, for example, would look fondly upon the prohibition of private cars as a "solution" for the problem of congested streets. Government's numerous "free" services, moreover, create permanent excess demand over supply and therefore permanent "shortages" of the product. Government, in short, acquiring its revenue by coerced confiscation rather than by voluntary investment and consumption, is not and *cannot* be run like a business. Its inherent gross inefficiencies, the impossibility for it to clear the market, will insure its being a mare's nest of trouble on the economic scene.[4]

In former times, the inherent mismanagement of government was generally considered a good argument for keeping as many things as possible out of government hands. After all, when one has invested in a losing proposition, one tries to refrain from pouring good money after bad. And yet, Dr. Galbraith would have us redouble our determination to pour the taxpayer's hard-earned money down the rathole of the "public sector," and uses the very defects of government operation as his major argument!

Professor Galbraith has two supporting arrows in his bow. First, he states that, as people's living standards rise, the added goods are not worth as much to them as the earlier ones. This is standard knowledge; but Galbraith somehow deduces from this decline that people's private wants are now worth nothing to them. But if that is the case, then why should *government* "services," which have expanded at a much faster rate, still be worth so much as to require a further shift of resources to the public sector? His final argument is that private wants are all artificially induced by business advertising which automatically "creates" the wants that it supposedly serves. In short, people, according to Galbraith, would, if let alone, be content with non-affluent, presumably subsistence-level living; *advertising* is the villain that spoils this primitive idyll.

Aside from the philosophical problem of how A can "create" B's wants and desires without B's having to place his own stamp of approval upon them, we are faced here with a curious view of the economy. *Is* everything above subsistence "artificial"? By what standard? Moreover, why in the world should a business go through the extra bother and expense of inducing a change in consumer wants, when it can profit by serving the consumer's existing, un-"created" wants? The very "marketing revolution" that business is now undergoing, its increased and almost frantic concentration on "market research," demonstrates the reverse of Galbraith's view. For if, by advertising, business production automatically creates its own consumer demand, there would be no need whatever for market research—and no worry about bankruptcy either. In fact, far from the consumer in an affluent society being more of a "slave" to the business firm, the truth is precisely the opposite: for as living standards rise above subsistence, the consumer gets

[4] For more on the inherent problems of government operations, see Murray N. Rothbard, "Government in Business," in *Essays on Liberty, Volume IV* (Irvington-on-Hudson: Foundation for Economic Education, 1958), pp. 183-87.

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more particular and choosy about what he buys. The businessman must pay even greater court to the consumer than he did before: hence the furious attempts of market research to find out what the consumers want to buy.

There *is* an area of our society, however, where Galbraith's strictures on advertising may almost be said to apply — but it is in an area that he curiously never mentions. This is the enormous amount of advertising and propaganda *by government.* This is advertising that beams to the citizen the virtues of a product which, unlike business advertising, he never has a chance to test. If Cereal Company X prints a picture of a pretty girl declaiming that "Cereal X is yummy," the consumer, even if doltish enough to take this seriously, has a chance to test that proposition personally. Soon his *own* taste determines whether he will buy or not. But if a government agency advertises its own virtues over the mass media, the citizen has no direct test to permit him to accept or reject the claims. If any wants are artificial, they are those generated by government propaganda. Furthermore, business advertising is, at least, paid for by investors, and its success depends on the voluntary acceptance of the product by the consumers. Government advertising is paid for by means of taxes extracted from the citizens, and hence can go on, year after year, without check. The hapless citizen is cajoled into applauding the merits of the very people who, by coercion, are forcing him to pay for the propaganda. This is truly adding insult to injury.

IF PROFESSOR GALBRAITH and his followers are poor guides for dealing with the public sector, what standard does our analysis offer instead? The answer is the old Jeffersonian one: "that government is best which governs least." Any reduction of the public sector, any shift of activities from the public to the private sphere, is a net moral and economic gain.

Most economists have two basic arguments on behalf of the public sector, which we may only consider very briefly here. One is the problem of "external benefits." A and B often benefit, it is held, if they can force C into doing something. Much can be said in criticism of this doctrine; but suffice it to say here that any argument proclaiming the right and goodness of, say three neighbors, who yearn to form a string quartet, forcing a fourth neighbor at bayonet point to learn and play the viola, is hardly deserving of sober comment. The second argument is more substantial; stripped of technical jargon, it states that some essential services simply *cannot* be supplied by the private sphere, and that therefore government supply of these services is necessary. And yet, every single one of the services supplied by government has been, in the past, successfully furnished by private enterprise. The bland assertion that private citizens cannot possibly supply these goods is never bolstered, in the works of these economists, by any proof whatever. How is it, for example, that economists, so often given to pragmatic or utilitarian solutions, do not call for social "experiments" in this direction? Why must political experiments always be in the direction of more government? Why not give the free market a county or even a state or two, and see what it can accomplish?

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The Question of Federal Aid to Education

JOHN WEICHER

THE LARGEST LOBBY in Washington last year, according to the official statements of expenditure, was neither the AFL-CIO nor the National Association of Manufacturers, but the National Education Association. It spent its money largely to promote the most far-reaching of the proposals for Federal aid to elementary and secondary education, the Murray-Metcalf bill. Thus it fulfilled its promise of 1959 to wage an "all-out" fight for this measure, which provided over $1 billion each year for four years, to be divided among the states in accordance with their school-age populations, and available for school construction or teachers' salaries, as the states wished.

On behalf of this, the NEA out-spent the traditional lobbies; on behalf of this, or something close to it, the NEA and the Kennedy Administration are exerting every pressure they can bring to bear on the present Congress.

Few issues illuminate so sharply the contemporary left's faith in the Royal Touch of more money — preferably spent by government, by the largest possible unit of government. With the charm of several billion dollars, all the scrofulas of modern society will vanish. There may be a certain amount of truth in this in regard to sewage plants (ignoring the fact that local action is almost invariably cheaper), but it will not hold for education.

John Weicher is an Associate Editor of *New Individualist Review*.

The current agitation for Federal aid to education has resulted from the Soviet Union's being the first nation to launch a Sputnik and from its presumed lead in certain fields of space exploration and weapons development. But this lead has been achieved not through mere government aid to education, but through government *control* of education and, more immediately, of research. The Soviet Union has devoted its resources to fields which will yield results of direct value in its continued conflict with the free nations.

On our part, the United States has directed research into the military fields even before the National Defense Education Act. Its research contracts have long been a major item in the budgets of our leading universities. The Armed Forces have conducted their own language schools. Within the last two years, Congressmen A. Sydney Herlong and Walter Judd have sponsored legislation to create a Freedom Academy.

Admiral Hyman Rickover, perhaps the best-known critic of the nation's school deficiencies, has suggested that, if local and state agencies cannot educate children adequately, then Federal standards —Federal controls—should be set up. He has suggested these norms as a last resort, if other means of improving the schools fail. His chief emphasis has been on the scientific disciplines useful in defense, and he has based much of his argument on defense needs.

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Federal control of education — particularly Federal control by Admiral Rickover and others devoted to excellence in schools — has some appeal as a short-run, *ad hoc* measure needed for national survival. But this is not really the central point at issue; the argument from defense needs is largely window-dressing and defense is not among the major aims of the NEA. It professes strongly its opposition to Federal control of education, and Federal control by Admiral Rickover is the *last* thing it wants.

Robert Schuettinger's article, "Modern Education vs. Democracy," in the April issue of *New Individualist Review*, set forth the prevailing educational philosophy of the NEA. It is not Admiral Rickover's, but it is that of most of the state departments of public instruction, and of the United States Office of Education in the Eisenhower Administration, under Commissioner Lawrence Derthick, who bitterly opposed the views of Admiral Rickover, the Council for Basic Education (CBE), and other groups seeking more rigorous standards. The CBE has expressed the hope that the new Commissioner, Dr. Sterling McMurrin, does favor solid intellectual achievement, but if he does, he will face a monumental housecleaning job in his department before those views can prevail.

The question of standards was carefully avoided by both President Kennedy's Task Force on Education, and by a panel of citizens reporting on the need to extend the National Defense Education Act. Professor Arthur Bestor of the University of Illinois, a member of the latter panel, evaluated its report in these terms:

"Committees, I discover, will always agree to spend more money, whether or not they agree on anything else. I cannot conscientiously subscribe to a report like the present that refuses to discriminate the conspicuously valuable program from the comparatively worthless one, and devoutly prays Congress to make its sun to rise on the evil and on the good alike.

"The National Defense Education Act of 1958 is a hodge-podge of different measures. Certain of these have contributed importantly to the improvement of American education. Others, it seems to me, have reinforced the very tendencies that produced American educational weaknesses in the first place . . . The various federal educational programs that point in this adverse direction should, I feel, be abandoned or curtailed . . .

"The resources of the federal government should be husbanded for the purpose of stimulating the full development of our *intellectual* resources. Local communities should pay the full cost of the frills to which they may be addicted."[1]

Apparently, Professor Bestor was alone in his views.

THE DECLINE of standards has been a major phenomenon in education over the last twenty or more years. While most colleges were talking of the increased competition among prospective freshmen in the wake of the Soviet Sputnik, a 1958 profile of Harvard in *Harper's* magazine commented that Harvard was taking a larger and larger share of its entering class from the private schools, and expected to continue to do so as long as public school standards continued to fall. This situation may be changing as some of the public school systems change their policies under public criticism, but if so it is changing not because of the NEA, which has gone so far as to advocate a boycott of the Luce publications when *Life* magazine attacked "life-adjustment" education a few years ago, but in spite of it.

A major point of controversy has been Federal aid to private and parochial schools. Enrollment at these schools has been growing more and more rapidly since 1940, in the face of a mounting tax burden which must deter many people who would like to send their children to parochial or private schools. This is discomfiting to those who regard private schools as divisive and would like to see them eliminated. If Federal aid to public education only is approved by Congress, the added burden will seriously curtail the freedom of choice of many people as to where to educate their children, and a major step toward the eventual uni-

1. *Council for Basic Education Bulletin*, February, 1961, p. 3.

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formity of American education will be taken. But if Federal aid to private schools is approved also, then what has happened to the Constitutional separation of Church and State? Further, if Federal aid means Federal control, as it eventually must, we may then be on the way to a system similar to the French, where public and parochial schools offer identical curricula, both being administered by the state. Neither alternative is conducive to educational freedom.

In regard to whether Federal aid means Federal control, it should be noted that the state most in need of greater spending on education, according to the NEA statistics on per-capita spending and other indicators, is also the state whose opposition to Federal aid is likely to be most ferocious—Mississippi. The reasoning is quite simple: Federal aid is likely to mean integration, with or without the Powell amendment prohibiting funds to segregated schools.[2] If grants *are* made to the Southern states to build segregated schools, the interesting question arises of whether the Federal government is violating the law of the land as expressed in *Brown v. Board of Education.* But if integrated schools only are allowed, surely the Southern states will abstain from participating in the program; and since the Southern states are those most lagging in their educational programs, this would mean that the states for whom the program is designed are excluded, rendering the program largely useless, if not worse: for in that case the Southern states would be taxed to help support the educational programs of the richer, integrated Northern states, making it harder for the South to raise its educational standards and actually contributing to greater inequality of educational opportunity.

Even on the NEA's own quantitative basis, impressive evidence has been compiled to show that Federal aid is unnecessary. The classroom shortage, estimated at over 300,000 rooms five years ago, is now estimated at 132,400 by the Office of Education.[3] The accuracy of both these figures is open to question, however; each state department of public instruction is asked to estimate its own needs, based on its own definitions (which vary from year to year) of "substandard" and "over-crowded." Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina investigated his own state's reported shortage and discovered that a classroom was counted as "needed" for each classroom having more students than the desired ratio. If a classroom had 29 students and the desired ratio was 28, a "shortage" of one was counted.[4] Roger Freeman, in discussing the state estimates, wrote: "The so-called 10-year requirements . . . should not be treated as essential needs nor as attainable goals but as what most of them are: expressions of the desires of functional administrators who are conscientiously trying to promote what they believe to be in the best interest of the people but who cannot be expected to judge the relative priorities of the multitude of claims for public funds nor the over-all capacity of the economy to meet them."[5]

Everyone from President Kennedy to Freeman agrees that this country will need 60,000 new classrooms a year for the next ten years. But over the last five years, we have been building at a rate of approximately 70,000 classrooms per year—without Federal aid.[6] This means that if the state and local authorities continue to build at the current rate, the existing shortage (whatever it is), all new needs for the expanding population, and replacements for all classrooms which become unusable between now and 1970, will all be supplied.

2. In spite of the protestations of the advocates of the NDEA, it is clear that Federal aid means Federal control even in that act. Professor Claude J. Bartlett of George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, reported a startling example of Federal intervention in a Guidance and Counseling Institute set up under the NDEA at his college; eventually, the school dropped out of the program. See "Federal Control of Education: A Case History," in *Human Events,* March 10, 1961, p. 152.

3. Wilkinson, Ernest L., "A Report to Thruston Morton," *Human Events,* March 17, 1961, p. 165. Wilkinson quotes the United States Office of Education canvass for 1959.

4. *Congressional Record,* February 16, 1960.

5. Freeman, Roger A., *School Needs in the Decade Ahead* (Washington, 1958), p. 192.

6. *Ibid.,* p. 200, and Wilkinson, *loc. cit.,* p. 165.

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The other chief "need" for Federal aid is to augment teachers' salaries. Freeman pointed out that teachers are now better off than they were in 1929, and that even according to the NEA's own figures, the supply of teachers is steadily catching up on the need for them. Moreover, in the fields where teachers are sought by outside employers—chiefly science—the teachers themselves refuse to permit higher salaries in these fields without across-the-board raises. At current rates of increase in salaries, teachers will be earning between $6,000 and $6,700 (in present dollars) by 1970. Freeman concludes: "The great majority of teachers do as well financially in teaching as they could anywhere else. Many do better."[7]

The real needs of the schools — which neither the NEA nor the Administration propose to remedy — are for higher standards and tighter discipline, which are inter-related. The former requires a change of philosophy among the departments of education and the NEA, the latter a change in philosophy among the children and their parents, and perhaps among teachers and administrators. When these problems are dealt with and we are near a reasonable working solution of them, we will find that Federal aid to education has ceased to be necessary to improve the schools. And these problems can best be handled on a local level. The NEA would be more useful if it stressed more rigorous training for its members in the subjects they teach, and if it sought to work with state and local officials to provide better discipline within the schools.[8]

7. Freeman, *op. cit.*, Chapters III and IV, especially pp. 167-172.

8. The discipline problem, which is not discussed in the article, is widely recognized as extremely acute, particularly in the larger cities. Chicago has recently seen a 14-year-old fifth-grader confess the murder of his teacher during school hours; a number of teachers of my acquaintance have told me they will refuse to teach in the city at all rather than teach in certain schools. New York's problems are, of course, well known. It is questionable if any kind of Federal aid would be effective in these areas, short of sending in the National Guard.

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Tocqueville and the Bland Leviathan

ROBERT SCHUETTINGER

[The power of government] covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power . . . does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies a people, until each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and hard-working animals, of which the government is the shepherd.[1]

—Alexis de Tocqueville

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE was an aristocrat who was at the same time the most perceptive critic and the warmest friend that democracy ever had; he loved liberty, as he himself said, with "a holy passion," and his greatest fear was that in the new Age of the Common Man the ideal of equality would become the means by which freedom would be extinguished.

His two books, *Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime and the French Revolution,* earned for Tocqueville a lasting reputation primarily because he did not think that the historian's role should be confined to relating facts or that the sociologist should be merely a statistician; he was interested in something more than in *wie es gewesen.* What he wanted to do was to understand *why* institutions grew up and *why* events happened. Describing America he regarded as much less important than the task of analyzing democracy.

He read little and was indebted to few predecessors. Those few, however, included Plato, Aristotle and Burke, and these he mastered. It seems certain that his limited reading was not due to any lack of bookishness but rather to a conscious desire to think his own thoughts; because of this habit his works are packed with original ideas. In studying Tocqueville the reader is forced to proceed at a slow pace since he soon notices that almost every paragraph is the germ of another book.

He has been called "the prophet of the mass age," because he foresaw, in 1835, what were to become the two great movements of our time: the increasing centralization of government power and the irreversible trend toward equality. The first movement he condemned without hesitation; the second, he welcomed, with reservations. He knew that democracy, while inevitable, could come to any country in either one of two forms: a free variety or an unfree. By a free democracy, Tocqueville meant what we now call 19th century liberalism: a democratically-elected government in which the rights of the individual are supreme and are safeguarded by a constitution putting definite limits on the power of the state. Unfree democracy, according to Tocqueville, can again be divided into two types. The first of these is the totalitarian state which is based on the belief that one man (*Fuehrer-prinzip*) or group of men (dictatorship of the vanguard of the proletariat) effectively rep-

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1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, Vintage Books, 1954), vol. II, Bk. VI.

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resents the will of the people and is mandated by them to eliminate all opposition. The second type is usually spoken of today as the welfare state; it is what I have called in the title of this essay "the Bland Leviathan," a despotism different from the first in that it is gentle and beneficient. This does not mean, however, that the second form of despotism is any more to be desired than the first; as Justice Brandeis has remarked, "Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government's purposes are beneficient."[2]

TOCQUEVILLE SAW that the real threat to a democratic society in our age would not be what the Tories feared, anarchy, nor would it be the absolute dictatorship feared by the Old Liberals; rather it would be the mild tyranny of mediocrity, a standardization of mind and spirit, a gray uniformity enforced by a central government in the name of "humanity" and "social justice."

Tocqueville was able to make an analysis which has been confirmed by history because he divested himself of as many of his prejudices as he possibly could; he was determined to be interested in the *truth* and in nothing else. Politically, he was a critic of both parties and a member of none. "Intellectually," he once wrote, "I have an inclination for democratic institutions, but I am an aristocrat by instinct . . . I have a passionate love for liberty, law and respect for rights. . . . I am neither of the revolutionary party or of the conservative. Nevertheless, when all is said, I hold more by the latter than the former. For I differ from the latter more as to means than as to end, while I differ from the former both as to means and end."[3] Tocqueville could not be a revolutionary because, as he once noted, their "spirit combines very well with a love for absolute government"[4]; nor could he ever feel entirely comfortable with Tories since time and again their "insane fear of socialism" would "throw them into the arms of despotism."[5] Clearly, as he himself said, he was "a liberal of a new kind."[6]

Tocqueville was born in 1805 at a time when a people's emperor ruled France; his grandfather, the Comte de Tocqueville, had been imprisoned during the Revolution and his more distant ancestors were included in the rolls of the Norman conquerors. He never used his title, however, and determined to make a living for himself as a lawyer and writer. In 1831, with his friend Gustave de Beaumont, he toured the United States; upon his return he began to write *Democracy in America,* the book which placed him second only to Montesquieu among French political scientists. Shortly after its publication, he was elected to the presidency of the *Academie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.* In 1839, he was elected to the Chamber, serving as deputy from Valognes and, briefly, as foreign minister for the Second Republic. His political career was terminated abruptly by Louis Napoleon's *coup d'etat* in 1851; after spending two days in a make-shift jail, Tocqueville retired to his estate to write history instead of make it. He died at Cannes in 1859, his life cut short by a disease of the lungs.

TOCQUEVILLE APPLAUDED the men who had overthrown the Old Regime; in his own time, he ranked himself with those who were dedicated to destroying the power of privileged groups still hostile to liberty and equality. He saw, however, that as the old goals of equality before the law and equality of opportunity were reached, more and more men began to advocate the only possible means by which equality could be *further* extended: systematic

2. Justice Brandeis, in his dissenting opinion in *Olmstead v. United States* (XXX, 277, U. S. 479, 1927) went on to warn that, "The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding." Quoted in F. A. Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty,* (Chicago, 1960), p. 253.

3. Antoine Redier, *Comme disait M. de Tocqueville . . .* (Paris, 1925), p. 85.

4. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European Revolution and Correspondence with Gobineau,* John Lukacs, editor, (New York, Anchor Books, 1959), p. 21.

5. *Ibid.,* p. 22.

6. Alexis de Tocqueville, Oeuvres, (Paris, 1866), vol. V, p. 431. I have used J. P. Mayer's translations in his *Alexis de Tocqueville* (New York, Harper, 1960).

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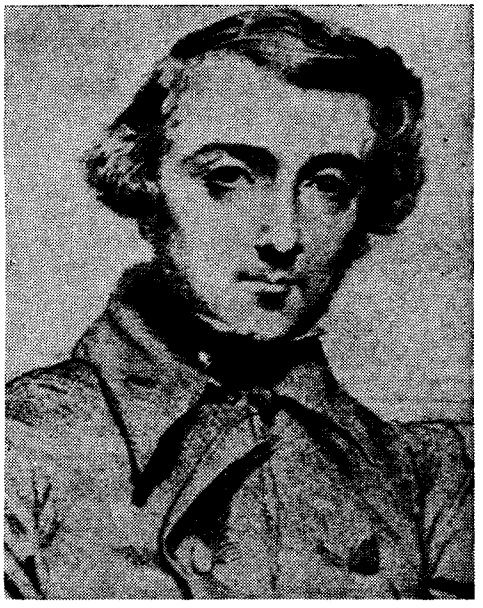
regimentation directed by a centralized government. These men, who wanted economic equality even at the expense of liberty, were the socialists. As Tocqueville wrote, "They had sought to be free in order to make themselves equal; but in proportion as equality was more established by the aid of freedom, freedom itself was thereby rendered more difficult of attainment."[7]

By raising up the absolute sovereignty of the people to replace the old divine right of kings, men found that they had only exchanged one master for another, and erected a new despotism upon the ruins of the old. The idea that right is simply what the majority of the people want, Tocqueville dismissed as "the language of a slave."[8] In place of the notion that the supreme good is "the greatest happiness for the greatest number,"[9] Tocqueville believed in a natural law, an ideal of justice against which all men's actions must be measured.[10]

Tocqueville was not at all interested in the outward forms that state power assumed. As he once remarked, "When I see that the . . . means of absolute command are conferred on a people or a king, upon an aristocracy or a democracy, a monarchy or a republic, I recognize the germ of tyranny, and I journey onwards towards a land of more hopeful institutions."[11] What he *was* interested in was freedom.

But how did Tocqueville characterize the nature of freedom? If we are to distinguish between a genuinely free democracy and its perversion, this is the crucial question. In essence, he would have defined freedom as the right to do what you want to do, limited by natural obstacles but by no man-made restraints except the law that no man has a right to interfere in another's rights. He looked upon the spiritual nature of freedom, however, as much more important than any of its material benefits. He believed that in the long run, freedom brings prosperity to those who know how to keep it, but he admitted that there are times when it interferes with material comfort; there are times, in fact, when despotism alone can insure



wealth or even subsistence. He knew that time and again the widespread craving for material well-being, for "security," had led men straight to servitude.

The chief value of liberty, he thought, was that it gave men the opportunity to be what human beings *ought to be*. This is why he wrote: "That which at all times has so strongly attached the affection of certain men is the attraction of freedom herself, her native charms independent of her gifts . . . apart from all 'practical considerations' . . . the pleasure of speaking, acting and breathing without restraint, under no master but God and the law. *The man who asks of freedom anything other than itself is born to be a slave.*"[12]

7. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Oeuvres*, vol. III, p. 514.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 142.
9. In disagreeing with the utilitarianism of Bentham and J. S. Mill, Tocqueville avoided the intellectual trap in which the latter found himself. At one time in his career, Mill thought that if Communism did provide the most happiness for the most people it would be preferable to the risks of a free society. See J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, (New York, 1883), vol. I, p. 269.
10. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Oeuvres*, Vol. II, p. 142.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, (New York, Anchor Books, 1955), p. 169. (Italics mine.)

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Tocqueville saw that no men, including confirmed tyrants, disputed the merits of freedom; in the case of despots, however, they wished to keep it for themselves, on the theory that lesser men were unworthy of it. He was aware that the value of freedom *per se* has never been at issue; what men are really quarreling about is their opinion of their fellow men. The more contempt men feel for those around them, the greater is their admiration for a strong central government which will show them how they ought to live.

In Tocqueville's own time, as in ours, there was never any shortage of what Wilhelm Roepke calls "the power-thirsty, cocksure and arrogant planners and organizers."[13] In a speech to the 1848 Constituent Assembly (published in this issue for the first time in English) Tocqueville pointed out the one characteristic which unites socialists of all schools: "a profound opposition to personal liberty." What the socialists wanted — a complete re-organization of society along "rational" lines — he saw could never be accomplished without instituting a new system of serfdom.[14]

UNLIKE HIS opponents on both the Left and the Right, Tocqueville had a strong faith in the democratic instincts of the majority of the people. Because he knew that nations accustomed to freedom would never voluntarily submit to totalitarian rule, Tocqueville was able to predict precisely what did come about: that "hot" socialism would be discarded in Western Europe and the United States and that democracies would instead be corrupted slowly and almost unnoticeably by "a servitude of a regular, quiet, and gentle kind."[15] He foresaw further that this "new despotism" would combine with some of the outward forms of freedom[16] and that it would establish itself under the guise of the sovereignty of the people.

Three decades before the *Wohlfahrtstaat* of Bismarck and a full century before the Second New Deal, Tocqueville correctly perceived what many men of good minds and liberal education have difficulty in seeing even today. He understood that the time would come when "a new thing" which he could not name would have a power that is "absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild." Its authority would be like that of a parent, he wrote, except that a parent prepares his children for adulthood, while this power seeks, on the contrary, to keep its charges in perpetual childhood. This government willingly labors for the happiness of its subjects, "but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?"[17]

This then, as Tocqueville foresaw it, is the approximate condition of society in the United States today. We live in the shadow of a "Bland Leviathan," an overpowering influence predicated on the

13. Wilhelm Roepke, *A Humane Economy*, (Chicago, Regnery, 1960), p. 283.

14. In using the word "serfdom," Tocqueville was being precise. The British Labour Government, in 1947, passed an Act giving itself the power to assign any British worker to any job that *it* saw fit — for any length of time. See F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, (Chicago, Phoenix Books, 1957), p. xiii.

15. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II, p. 337.

16. This point is of crucial importance for it is the distinctive characteristic of the welfare state; its proponents deny that they are socialists or authoritarians and, in most cases, they sincerely believe that their innovations would not seriously impair our freedoms. Prof. F. A. Hayek, in his *Constitution of Liberty*, (p. 259), explains, in one succinct paragraph, what Tocqueville's prophecy has come to mean:

"We shall see that some of the aims of the welfare state," he writes, "can be realized without detriment to individual liberty, though not necessarily by the methods which seem the most obvious and are therefore the most popular; that others can be similarly achieved to a certain extent, though only at a cost much greater than people imagine or would be willing to bear, or only slowly and gradually as wealth increases; and that, finally, there are others — and they are those particularly dear to the hearts of the socialists—that cannot be realized in a society that wants to preserve personal freedom."

17. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II, p. 336.

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root assumption that the needs of society, as determined by the planners, should take precedence over the liberties of individuals. He saw that this leviathan has three natural enemies: progress, excellence and freedom. Because it is bland, and because it lacks a definite purpose, it does not attempt to kill these enemies; instead, it imprisons, cripples or slowly suffocates them.

ANY LIMITATION on freedom, Tocqueville realized, must inevitably restrict progress. He feared, in fact, that the equalitarian oppression which was aimed at society's most original minds would result in a general deadening of civilization. "Man will waste his strength in bootless and solitary trifling," he wrote, "and swing backwards and forwards forever without getting fresh ideas."[18]

Ironically, it is many of our best and most creative minds who are bringing us to a point where our medical profession, most of our educational system, and the greater part of our scientists will be slowly absorbed under the all-protecting power of the federal government. Beguiled as they are by the humanitarian visions of the welfare state, these men have forgotten what, upon reflection, they must admit: that no man or group of men can hope to direct the creative energies of a nation without those energies being diverted into the safe and traditional patterns so congenial to administrators.

Progress has been defined as that which the rules and regulations do not foresee. Admiral Hyman Rickover,[19] among many others, has recently borne witness to the difficulties in any system where professional administrators are assigned to supervise intellectuals. The instincts of the two groups are almost completely opposed. The creative man wants plenty of room and time to follow his own hunches; he often harbors a disinterest in, or even a contempt for, the other "members of the team." The bureaucrat is trained to shun innovations; he is suspicious of reform; his life is dedicated to following precedents; in his world, there is no place for initiative.

Just as no society based on the principles of the welfare state can encourage progress, neither can it long endure the existence of excellence — except as a strictly private possession to be nurtured after-hours or in retirement. In all but a few parts of the "public sector" and in large areas of the private, everything above the average is being quietly smothered in the name of "equality" and "democracy"; examples are too many and too obvious to cite here. Since above-average talent in the right positions is a necessity for progress and productivity, however, it is not difficult to see where the road we are on will end. No one has ever been more uncompromisingly hostile to mediocrity than Tocqueville; he was certain that when the average, the norm, are consistently held up as standards to be identified with, individuality—and freedom itself—must soon perish.

After progress and excellence, freedom will be the last casualty of the welfare state—as it makes the transition to a totalitarian regime. The planners, someone has said, start by wanting to control things, but they end by controlling people. As government gets bigger and bigger, there is an increasing tendency for the democratically-elected legislature to delegate wider and wider powers to administrative agencies. These agencies are always supervised by non-elected officials who are practically independent of the President, the Congress or the courts.[20] Lord Ewart, in his important book, *The New Despotism,* cites as one

18. Quoted in Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind,* (Chicago, Regnery, 1960), p. 225. Tocqueville here almost exactly describes the modern bureaucrats' fondness for paperwork and for using words and phrases which convey the impression of activity while concealing their lack of accomplishments. Examples come readily to mind: "co-ordination," "stability," "continuing effort," "the situation is under analysis," etc.

19. Vice-Admiral Hyman Rickover, "Don't Hamstring the Talented," *Saturday Evening Post,* February 13, 1960.

20. Numerous examples of the harassment of private citizens by petty officials of the federal agencies (FTC, NLRB, FCC, etc.) are given in Lowell Mason's *The Language of Dissent,* (New York, 1959). The author enunciates "Mason's Law" which holds that bureaucracy, out of view of the public eye, will arrogate to itself all power available under a statute, despite constitutional limitations.

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example of this trend the Rating and Valuation Act of 1925 in which it is provided that . . . "[the Minister] may modify the provisions of this Act so far as may appear to the Minister necessary or expedient for carrying [his orders] into effect."[21] Despite evidence which, by 1961, has become overwhelming, we are still solemnly assured by people who will insist that they are democrats, that we should not be afraid of state power because, after all, *we ourselves* are the government. Except for a few minor cases, this platitude was never true, and in this century, there is far less basis for the idea than there ever was.[22]

THE PROPER solution to the problems posed by democracy, according to Tocqueville, was not a reversion to aristocracy, but rather a renewed determination to harness the many virtues of the democratic process in order to insure that the rights of individuals would not be sacrificed to the demands of the state. He believed that free institutions could not be preserved except on a basis of equality. "Far from finding fault with equality because it inspires a spirit of independence," he wrote, "I praise it primarily for that very reason." By making all men conscious of their rights, he thought, "equality would prepare the remedy for the ills which it engenders."[23]

Tocqueville clearly showed the way in which modern society could, if it chooses, escape from "the new despotism." A proper concept of equality is the first necessity; everywhere we must strengthen the position of private individuals — at all levels of society — in their own rights and property. Almost as important, we must strengthen those *intermediate powers* which stand between the government and ourselves, that is, our churches, labor unions, newspapers, political parties, business organizations, fraternal orders, etc. It is difficult, in a mass society, for one person to make himself heard but it can be done if he uses the amplifier provided by his like-minded associates. Following the same principle, we must maintain all the peculiar rights and duties of each of our independent governing bodies: the courts, Congress, the Presidency, the states, and the local administrations. At the same time we must be alert to promptly limit any or all of these bodies when they exceed their authorized powers.

We must also beware of slogans such as "national interest," or "national purpose." The words "national interest," especially in a time of war or emergency, often do mean something, but just as often they serve merely as a convenient device for justifying authoritarianism. The notion behind the idea of a national purpose, of course, is a dangerous one. It is based on the assumption that there is a collective interest which is separate and different from the interests of all the people which compose the society. In this country, until recently, we have always had individual hopes, ambitions, purposes; we have left the "national purposes" to the totalitarian states with their stadiums full of troops and flags.

Tocqueville, as usual, expressed what needed to be said when he wrote that:

> It would seem as if the rulers of our time sought only to use men to make things great; I wish that they would try a little more to make great men; that they would set less value on the work and more on the workman; that they would never forget that a nation cannot long remain strong when every man belonging to it is individually weak; and that no form or combination of social policy has yet been devised to make an energetic people out of a community of pusillanimous and enfeebled citizens.[24]

This is not an ideal to appeal to many politicians — who love power — but it should appeal to all those who love the ideals that Tocqueville worked so hard to preserve: progress, excellence, and liberty.

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21. Lord Hewart, *The New Despotism*, (London, 1929), p. 10.

22. The possibility of a totalitarian state was not seriously considered until the 19th century and never put into practice until the 20th. Tocqueville writes: "No sovereign ever lived in former ages so absolute . . . as to undertake to administer . . . all the parts of a great empire; none ever attempted to subject all his subjects . . . to strict uniformity of regulation." See *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Bk. IV, Ch. VI.

23. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II, p. 305.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

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Tocqueville on Socialism

Translated by RONALD HAMOWY

Translator's Note:

In February, 1848, the July Monarchy of Louis Philippe was overthrown, and the Second French Republic established. The new republic believed that the unemployment problem which was plaguing Paris could be solved by setting up government work-projects, guaranteeing employment at a certain wage rate for all who desired it. On September 12th, the Constituent Assembly debated the continuance of this arrangement and Tocqueville rose to speak against it. In the course of his speech he entered onto the subject of socialism, which he considered the logical consequence of recognizing the "right to work," and devoted most of his time to a discussion of the socialist position.

This translation from the transcript of the proceedings, here appears for the first time in English.

NOTHING CAN be gained by not discussing issues which call into question the very roots of our society and which, sooner or later, must be faced. At the bottom of the amendment which is under consideration, perhaps unknown to its author but for me as clear as day, is the question of socialism. [*Prolonged Sensation — Murmurs from the Left.*]

Yes, gentlemen, sooner or later, the question of socialism, which everyone seems to fear and which no one, up to now, has dared treat of, must be brought into the open, and this Assembly must decide it. We are duty-bound to clear up this issue, which lies heavy upon the breast of France. I confess that it is principally because of this that I mount the podium today, that the question of socialism might finally be settled. I must know, the National Assembly must know, all of France must know — is the February Revolution a socialist revolution or is it not? [*"Excellent!"*]

It is not my intention to examine here the different systems which can all be categorized as socialist. I want only to attempt to uncover those characteristics which are common to all of them and to see if the February Revolution can be said to have exhibited those traits.

Now, the first characteristic of all socialist ideologies is, I believe, an incessant, vigorous and extreme appeal to the material passions of man. [*Signs of approval.*]

Thus, some have said: "Let us rehabilitate the body"; others, that "work, even of the hardest kind, must be not only useful, but agreeable"; still others, that "man must be paid, not according to his merit, but according to his need"; while, finally, they have told us here that the object of the February Revolution, of socialism, is to procure unlimited wealth for all.

A second trait, always present, is an attack, either direct or indirect, on the principle of private property. From the first socialist who said, fifty years ago, that "property is the origin of all the ills of the world," to the socialist who spoke from this podium and who, less charitable than the first, passing from property to the property-holder, exclaimed that "property is theft," all socialists, all, I insist, attack, either in a direct or indirect manner, private property. [*"True, true."*] I do not pretend to hold that all who do so, assault it in the frank and brutal manner which one of our colleagues has adopted. But I say that all

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socialists, by more or less roundabout means, if they do not destroy the principle upon which it is based, transform it, diminish it, obstruct it, limit it, and mold it into something completely foreign to what we know and have been familiar with since the beginning of time as private property. [*Excited signs of assent.*]

Now, a third and final trait, one which, in my eyes, best describes socialists of all schools and shades, is a profound opposition to personal liberty and scorn for individual reason, a complete contempt for the individual. They unceasingly attempt to mutilate, to curtail, to obstruct personal freedom in any and all ways. They hold that the State must not only act as the director of society, but must further be master of each man, and not only master, but keeper and trainer. [*"Excellent."*] For fear of allowing him to err, the State must place itself forever by his side, above him, around him, better to guide him, to maintain him, in a word, to confine him. They call, in fact, for the forfeiture, to a greater or less degree, of human liberty, [*Further signs of assent.*] to the point where, were I to attempt to sum up what socialism is, I would say that it was simply a new system of serfdom. [*Lively assent.*]

I have not entered into a discussion of the details of these systems. I have indicated what socialism is by pointing out its universal characteristics. They suffice to allow an understanding of it. Everywhere you might find them, you will be sure to find socialism, and wherever socialism is, these characteristics are met.

IS SOCIALISM, gentlemen, as so many have told us, the continuation, the legitimate completion, the perfecting of the French Revolution? Is it, as it has been pretended to be, the natural development of democracy? No, neither one or the other. Remember the Revolution! Reexamine the awesome and glorious origin of our modern history. Was it by appealing to the material needs of man, as a speaker of yesterday insisted, that the French Revolution accomplished those great deeds that the whole world marvelled at? Do you believe that it spoke of wages, of well-being, of unlimited wealth, of the satisfaction of physical needs?

Citizen Mathieu: I said nothing of the kind.

Citizen de Tocqueville: Do you believe that by speaking of such things it could have aroused a whole generation of men to fight for it at its borders, to risk the hazards of war, to face death? No, gentlemen, it was by speaking of greater things, of love of country, of the honor of France, of virtue, generosity, selflessness, glory, that it accomplished what it did. Be certain, gentlemen, that it is only by appealing to man's noblest sentiments that one can move them to attain such heights. [*"Excellent, excellent."*]

And as for property, gentlemen: it is true that the French Revolution resulted in a hard and cruel war against certain property-holders. But, concerning the very principle of private property, the Revolution always respected it. It placed it in its constitutions at the top of the list. No people treated this principle with greater respect. It was engraved on the very frontispiece of its laws.

The French Revolution did more. Not only did it consecrate private property, it universalized it. It saw that still a greater number of citizens participated in it. [*Varied exclamations. "Exactly what we want!"*]

It is thanks to this, gentlemen, that today we need not fear the deadly consequences of socialist ideas which are spread throughout the land. It is because the French Revolution peopled the land of France with ten million property-owners that we can, without danger, allow these doctrines to appear before us. They can, without doubt, destroy society, but thanks to the French Revolution, they will not prevail against it and will not harm us. [*"Excellent."*]

And finally, gentlemen, liberty. There is one thing which strikes me above all. It is that the Old Regime, which doubtless differed in many respects from that system of government which the socialists call for (and we must realize this) was, in its political philosophy, far less distant from socialism than we had believed. It is far closer to that system

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than we. The Old Regime, in fact, held that wisdom lay only in the State and that the citizens were weak and feeble beings who must forever be guided by the hand, for fear they harm themselves. It held that it was necessary to obstruct, thwart, restrain individual freedom, that to secure an abundance of material goods it was imperative to regiment industry and impede free competition. The Old Regime believed, on this point, exactly as the socialists of today do. It was the French Revolution which denied this.

Gentlemen, what is it that has broken the fetters which, from all sides, had arrested the free movement of men, goods and ideas? What has restored to man his individuality, which is his real greatness? The French Revolution! [*Approval and clamor.*] It was the French Revolution which abolished all those impediments, which broke the chains which you would refashion under a different name. And it is not only the members of that immortal assembly—the Constituent Assembly, that assembly which founded liberty not only in France but throughout the world—which rejected the ideas of the Old Regime. It is the eminent men of all the assemblies which followed it!

AND AFTER this great Revolution, is the result to be that society which the socialists offer us, a formal, regimented and closed society where the State has charge of all, where the individual counts for nothing, where the community masses to itself all power, all life, where the end assigned to man is solely his material welfare—this society where the very air is stifling and where light barely penetrates? Is it to be for this society of bees and beavers, for this society, more for skilled animals than for free and civilized men, that the French Revolution took place? Is it for this that so many great men died on the field of battle and on the gallows, that so much noble blood watered the earth? Is it for this that so many passions were inflamed, that so much genius, so much virtue walked the earth?

No! I swear it by those men who died for this great cause! It is not for this that they died. It is for something far greater, far more sacred, far more deserving of them and of humanity. [*"Excellent."*] If it had been but to create such a system, the Revolution was a horrible waste. A perfected Old Regime would have served adequately. [*Prolonged clamor.*]

I mentioned a while ago that socialism pretended to be the legitimate continuation of democracy. I myself will not search, as some of my colleagues have done, for the real etymology of this word, democracy. I will not, as was done yesterday, rummage around in the garden of Greek roots to find from whence comes this word. [*Laughter.*] I look for democracy where I have seen it, alive, active, triumphant, in the only country on earth where it exists, where it could possibly have been established as something durable in the modern world—in America. [*Whispers.*]

There you will find a society where social conditions are even more equal than among us; where the social order, the customs, the laws are all democratic; where all varieties of people have entered, and where each individual still has complete independence, more freedom than has been known in any other time or place; a country essentially democratic, the only completely democratic republics the world has ever known. And in these republics you will search in vain for socialism. Not only have socialist theories not captured public opinion there, but they play such an insignificant role in the intellectual and political life of this great nation that they cannot even rightfully boast that people fear them.

America today is the one country in the world where democracy is totally sovereign. It is, besides, a country where socialist ideas, which you presume to be in accord with democracy, have held least sway, the country where those who support the socialist cause are certainly in the worst position to advance them. I personally would not find it inconvenient if they were to go there and propagate their philosophy, but in their own interests, I would advise them not to. [*Laughter.*]

A Member: Their goods are being sold right now.

Citizen de Tocqueville: No, gentlemen.

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Democracy and socialism are not interdependent concepts. They are not only different, but opposing philosophies. Is it consistent with democracy to institute the most meddlesome, all-encompassing and restrictive government, provided that it be publicly chosen and that it act in the name of the people? Would the result not be tyranny, under the guise of legitimate government and, by appropriating this legitimacy assuring to itself the power and omnipotence which it would otherwise assuredly lack? Democracy extends the sphere of personal independence; socialism confines it. Democracy values each man at his highest; socialism makes of each man an agent, an instrument, a number. Democracy and socialism have but one thing in common — equality. But note well the difference. Democracy aims at equality in liberty. Socialism desires equality in constraint and in servitude. [*"Excellent, excellent."*]

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION, accordingly, must not be a "social" one, and if it must not be then we must have the courage to say so. If it must not be then we must have the energy to loudly proclaim that it should not be, as I am doing here. When one is opposed to the ends, he must be opposed to the means by which one arrives at those ends. When one has no desire for the goal he must not enter onto the path which necessarily leads him there. It has been proposed today that we enter down that very path.

We must not follow that political philosophy which Baboeuf so ardently embraced [*cries of approval*]—Baboeuf, the grand-father of all modern socialists. We must not fall into the trap he himself indicated, or, better, suggested by his friend, pupil and biographer, Buonarotti. Listen to Buonarotti's words. They merit attention, even after fifty years.

A Member: There are no Babovists here.

Citizen de Tocqueville: "The abolition of individual property and the establishment of the Great National Economy was the final goal of his (Baboeuf's) labors. But he well realized that such an order could not be established immediately following victory. He thought it essential that [the State] conduct itself in such manner that the whole people would do away with private property through a realization of their own needs and interests." Here are the principal methods by which he thought to realize his dream. (Mind you, it is his own panegyrist I am quoting.) "To establish, by laws, a public order in which property-holders, provisionally allowed to keep their goods, would find that they possessed neither wealth, pleasure, or consideration, where, forced to spend the greater part of their income on investment or taxes, crushed under the weight of a progressive tax, removed from public affairs, deprived of all influence, forming, within the State, nothing but a class of suspect foreigners, they would be forced to leave the country, abandoning their goods, or reduced to accepting the establishment of the Universal Economy."

A Representative: We're there already!

Citizen de Tocqueville: There, gentlemen, is Baboeuf's program. I sincerely hope that it is not that of the February republic. No, the February republic must be democratic, but it must not be socialist —

A Voice from the Left: Yes! [*"No! No!" (interruption)*]

Citizen de Tocqueville: And if it is not to be socialist, what then will it be?

A Member from the Left: Royalist!

Citizen de Tocqueville (turning toward the left): It might, perhaps become so, if you allow it to happen, [*much approval*] but it will not.

If the February Revolution is not socialist, what, then, is it? Is it, as many people say and believe, a mere accident? Does it not necessarily entail a complete change of government and laws? I don't think so.

When, last January, I spoke in the Chamber of Deputies, in the presence of most of the delegates, who murmured at their desks, albeit because of different reasons, but in the same manner in which you murmured at yours a while ago— [*"Excellent, excellent."*]

(The speaker turns towards the left) — I told them: Take care. Revolution is in the air. Can't you feel it? Revolu-

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tion is approaching. Don't you see it? We are sitting on a volcano. The record will bear out that I said this. And why? —[*Interruption from the left.*]

Did I have the weakness of mind to suppose that revolution was coming because this or that man was in power, or because this or that incident excited the political anger of the nation? No, gentlemen. What made me believe that revolution was approaching, what actually produced the revolution, was this: I saw a basic denial of the most sacred principles which the French Revolution had spread throughout the world. Power, influence, honors, one might say, life itself, were being confined to the narrow limits of one class, such that no country in the world presented a like example.

That is what made me believe that revolution was at our door. I saw what would happen to this privileged class, that which always happens when there exists small, exclusive aristocracies. The role of the statesman no longer existed. Corruption increased every day. Intrigue took the place of public virtue, and all deteriorated.

Thus, the upper class.

And among the lower classes, what was happening? Increasingly detaching themselves both intellectually and emotionally from those whose function it was to lead them, the people at large found themselves naturally inclining towards those who were well-disposed towards them, among whom were dangerous demagogues and ineffectual utopians of the type we ourselves have been occupied with here.

Because I saw these two classes, one small, the other numerous, separating themselves little by little from each other, the one reckless, insensible and selfish, the other filled with jealousy, defiance and anger, because I saw these two classes isolated and proceeding in opposite directions, I said — and was justified in saying — that revolution was rearing its head and would soon be upon us. [*"Excellent."*]

Was it to establish something similar to this that the February Revolution took place? No, gentlemen, I refuse to believe it. As much as any of you, I believe the opposite. I want the opposite, not only in the interests of liberty but also for the sake of public security.

I ADMIT that I did not work for the February Revolution, but, given it, I want it to be a dedicated and earnest revolution because I want it to be the last. I know that only dedicated revolutions endure. A revolution which stands for nothing, which is stricken with sterility from its birth, which destroys without building, does nothing but give birth to subsequent revolutions. [*Approval.*]

I wish, then, that the February revolution have a meaning, clear, precise and great enough for all to see.

And what is this meaning? In brief, the February Revolution must be the real continuation, the honest and sincere execution of that which the French Revolution stood for, it must be the actualization of that which our fathers dared but dream of. [*Much assent.*]

Citizen Ledru-Rollin: I demand the floor.

Citizen de Tocqueville: That is what the February Revolution must be, neither more nor less. The French Revolution stood for the idea that, in the social order, there might be no classes. It never sanctioned the categorizing of citizens into property-holders and proletarians. You will find these words, charged with hate and war, in none of the great documents of the French Revolution. On the contrary, it was grounded in the philosophy that, politically, no classes must exist; the Restoration, the July Monarchy, stood for the opposite. We must stand with our fathers.

The French Revolution, as I have already said, did not have the absurd pretension of creating a social order which placed into the hands of the State control over the fortunes, the well-being, the affluence of each citizen, which substituted the highly questionable "wisdom" of the State for the practical and interested wisdom of the governed. It believed that its task was big enough, to grant to each citizen enlightenment and liberty. [*"Excellent."*]

The Revolution had this firm, this noble, this proud belief which you seem to lack, that it sufficed for a courageous and honest man to have these two things, enlightenment and liberty, and to

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ask nothing more from those who govern him.

The Revolution was founded in this belief. It had neither the time nor the means to bring it about. It is our duty to stand with it and, this time, to see that it is accomplished.

Finally, the French Revolution wished —and it is this which made it not only beatified but sainted in the eyes of the people—to introduce charity into politics. It conceived the notion of duty towards the poor, towards the suffering, something more extended, more universal than had ever preceded it. It is this idea that must be recaptured, not, I repeat, by substituting the prudence of the State for individual wisdom, but by effectively coming to the aid of those in need, to those who, after having exhausted their resources, would be reduced to misery if not offered help, through those means which the State already has at its disposal.

That is essentially what the French Revolution aimed at, and that is what we ourselves must do.

I ask, is that socialism?

From the Left: Yes! Yes, exactly what socialism is.

Citizen de Tocqueville: Not at all!

No, that is not socialism but Christian charity applied to politics. There is nothing in it . . .

(*Interruption.*)

Citizen President: You cannot be heard. It is obvious that you do not hold the same opinion. You will get your chance to speak from the podium, but do not interrupt.

Citizen de Tocqueville: There is nothing there which gives to workers a claim on the State. There is nothing in the Revolution which forces the State to substitute itself in the place of the individual foresight and caution, in the place of the market, of individual integrity. There is nothing in it which authorizes the State to meddle in the affairs of industry or to impose its rules on it, to tyrannize over the individual in order to better govern him, or, as it is insolently claimed, to save him from himself. There is nothing in it but Christianity applied to politics.

Yes, the February Revolution must be Christian and democratic, but it must on no account be socialist. These words sum up all my thinking and I leave you with them.

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Conservatives or Individualists: Which Are We?

EDWARD C. FACEY

Editor's Note: It is the policy of NIR to stimulate discussion of the fundamental principles of individualist philosophy. Accordingly, we are presenting here both a critique of a number of ideas current in conservative circles, and a comment on this critique, both articles written by individualists. Since there is not unanimity on the editorial board in regard to the issues discussed here, neither viewpoint should be taken to be the official position of this Review.

LAST YEAR, at Sharon, Connecticut, a group of right-wing college students and graduates passed a statement of first principles which they embraced as a sort of masthead for their new political action group, Young Americans for Freedom. The group was heavily conservative and I think an examination of its statement adds light to the debate in the May, 1960, issue of *The Individualist*.[1] But first, some preliminary remarks.

The individualist's position is that the individual man is the epistemological starting point in any social analysis. His nature and rights must be closely regarded before any consideration may be given to his place in society.

Unlike all the other animals in creation, man can continually make choices and direct his activity to the substitution of more suitable conditions for less suitable ones, i.e., he can act for ends. Since man is dependent here upon the material reality about him, the key right significantly enabling these endeavors is the one that grants him the opportunity to convert or transform unused raw materials into desirable economic goods. Then, man must have the right to consume the goods or trade them with whomever he pleases. The latter activity is done within the free market, within the framework of society which encompasses the entire complex of all individuals and their multitudinous exchanges. Society is nothing more than a means by which the individual members may gain their sought-for ends more easily.

But there are some people who do not choose the economic means of producing and exchanging to gain ends. Instead, they would use force to acquire and enjoy the fruits of another man's labor. Franz Oppenheimer in *The State* calls this the "political means" of gaining wealth. It behooves the social members to divert a part of their production in order to establish institutions to expel looters so that man may continue existence secure in the right to produce and exchange property. This means that defense is another service that must be obtained in the market.

Conservatives, however, admire the historical solution to this problem: the establishment of an external non-social-market institution, government. They would install political officials and give them the power to seize wealth by taxation in order to repel the obstreperous persons mentioned previously. The individualist sees this as no solution but as merely the displacement of one set of

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1. "Individualist, Libertarian or Conservative—Which Are We?"

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looters in favor of another "legalized" set. The individualist believes in each man's absolute rights and would move to cut off any group that insists on using the political means of gaining wealth rather than the economic means.

Still, individualists merge with the conservatives in urging a strict adherence to the Constitution in the United States. This is a tactical maneuver. It is the strategy of individualists to work a Fabianism in reverse until one by one the parts of the political structure, beginning with the most absurd, are upended and continuing until nothing is left. The Constitution, strictly interpreted, aids in this process.

THE CONSTITUTION in Article I, Section 8, in the enumeration of powers, says that Congress may call forth the Militia "to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions." This provision establishes a predisposition that the American government should concern itself with defending domestic society. If this is so, taxation can be kept light and social economic power may grow without serious let or hindrance.

Conservatives, however, are not restricting themselves to this interpretation of the extent of federal governmental power. Forgetting the individual, they are today engaged in a Messianic pledge to defend what they call Western civilization. In this caper they are urging bilateral alliances, collective alliances such as NATO, and actual combat, if necessary, in such far away places as Quemoy, Matsu, and Berlin. They urge that the enemy is Communism, and no sacrifice, seemingly, is too great to combat it. Witness the Sharon Conference statement:

"We, as young conservatives, believe...

"That the forces of international Communism are, at present, the greatest single threat to [liberty];

"That the United States should stress victory over, rather than coexistence with, this menace; and

"That all foreign policy must be judged by this criterion: does it serve the just interests of the United States?"

Individualists would disagree vigorously on the first point, enough to say that statism or socialism is the threat and that Communism is merely one variant of this hydra-headed monster. The individualists would continue by saying that when the U. S. government is handed the vague, ambiguous power embodied in the "just interests" clause, subject to wide interpretation, we are on our way toward great diminution in liberty. What the conservatives, unwittingly perhaps, are getting at is that extensive statism must be adopted in order to defeat the international menace of Communism. In short, the conservatives would *use* the state rather than oppose it and in doing this induce a result likened to the foe they are supposed to be beating.

The growth of individual freedom is in the reduction of government harassment and intervention. Within the condition of the absence of interpersonal molestation a person should be allowed to do whatever he wants according to his wisdom and conscience. Yet, the Young Americans for Freedom are calling for the strengthening of the subpoena-empowered House *Un-American Activities* (whatever these two terms can or may mean) Committee. The individualist cannot countenance the coercing of peaceful individuals to appear before a tribunal unless there is evidence that these persons have injured others who are willing to press charges. Making people comply with a court order is a very serious matter.

THE CONSERVATIVES in Young Americans for Freedom acquit themselves similarly in other areas. Instead of committing battle against federal aid to education they ask that the aid be distributed to persons who have taken loyalty oaths. Instead of really contending with the Peace Corps they wish to make it "effective" with loyalty oaths for the members. They would even add a tax supported Freedom Academy. I wish these were minor activities of the Young Americans for Freedom but so far they seem to be the whole domestic program. All this while the Kennedy Welfare State grinds ceaselessly ahead.

In the international arena the program of the conservatives gives alarm. Make

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no mistake, the attempt at world-wide defense of the West has taken the United States far from even Constitutional moorings. Not only is the U. S. not sticking to domestic defense but also it cannot stick to an international defense function if it would carry out the conservative mandate. America has had to engage in vast economic aid programs to keep the "Allies" from becoming "neutral" or selling out to Russia. Even then most, if not all, of the recipient countries are hanging onto a veto power over the use of American installations that may be placed within these foreign territories. Some may even kick the U. S. out of their countries after installations are built if no further U. S. aid is forthcoming or domestic political considerations warrant. Meanwhile, the U. S. gives them military money in hopes that they will add some troops of their own to defend the "West."

In the words of Garet Garrett, we have adopted the program of Empire. We are being forced to divert billions of dollars, some of which might better be spent on complex home defenses, into staking out a risky security via political internationalism. Even if the Federal Government did not engage in functions which conservatives and individualists agree are impermissible, such as federal aid to education, public power or social security, it is still possible for government to close in on our liberties through this American Empire idea. The U. S. government is spending $40 billion a year on "defense" and I rarely see this sum attacked in conservative journals as too high. Conscription is now an accepted institution in military operations because somehow many of us cannot get excited about fighting in foreign lands for some nebulous thing called the West or the Free World. Often the regime upheld may itself have little understanding of individual liberty.

Individualists will ever guard against the machinations of the state, any state. They view as *actually* present and more serious the inroads the domestic state has made on their absolute right to life and property. For the state is the real aggressor and it cannot be too often repeated that it is folly to extend and deepen the hegemony of one state in order to diminish that of another. Whatever the results of this attempt, collectivism or socialism is the winner; individualism and personal freedom, the loser. Let the conservatives beware.

Mr. Facey's Article: A Comment

MR. FACEY raises issues which have often divided those who consider themselves individualists. To some degree, I can sympathize with his fears in regard to the conservative position. There is no question that, historically, conservatives have tended to be paternalistic and nationalistic; nor have they shied away from power. While admitting this, we must take into consideration the objectives conservatives have had in view in seeking political power. If they have been interested in defending and extending the liberties of their fellow-citizens, they were right. It is clear that most American conservatives (including the members of Young Americans for Freedom) of the present day fall into this category, most certainly on the domestic issues where Mr. Facey attacks them.

Therefore, in the interests of a clearer terminology, I would suggest that Mr. Facey call himself an anarchist (as he is) or a Constitutional libertarian (a position he holds as a temporary expedient); I think it is unfair of him to try to pre-empt the word "individualist," because, as noted above, most American conservatives are primarily devoted to conserving personal liberty and limiting the power of the state. They thus consider themselves individualists, and rightly so. Conservatives and most libertarians agree that some government is necessary to maximize freedom; they be-

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lieve that the police, the courts, and the armed services all restrict the freedom of various people at various times, but that the net effect is to increase freedom. The reasoning behind this position is well-known; John Locke is perhaps its most famous exponent.

Mr. Facey devotes most of his space to warning conservatives to beware of giving too much power to the federal government, on the excuse that a huge defense establishment is needed to fight the Communist menace. I think that most conservatives, including the military, would agree that the power of the military must always be restricted. But beyond the problem of growing military power, Mr. Facey is worried because many conservatives are interested in defending not only the United States but "what they call Western civilization."

This charge is true; conservatives are too well aware of the intensely difficult struggle through the last 2500 years to achieve and preserve our civilization to be willing to let it die undefended. One of its major traditions is individual liberty; in this, Western civilization is unique. It is within Western civilization that the liberty Mr. Facey wishes to extend has been developed. The only alternative that is currently available — Communism — will eliminate liberty, most particularly the economic liberty so important to both Mr. Facey and myself. The abolition or reduction of our military power now would be as disastrous to liberty as it would have been for the Athenians to abolish their own army and navy in the face of Darius and Xerxes.

ACCORDINGLY, the Conservatives prefer a strong military to Communist domination, even at an annual cost of $40 billion. They would indeed use the state to defeat Communism, but they would hardly term this "extensive statism," or "Empire." Many conservatives would join Mr. Facey in a vigorous attack on our present foreign aid program, while denying the practicality of the Fortress America concept he proposes instead — and wondering how he can suggest spending some of the foreign-aid billions on national defense and say that the defense budget is too high, in the same paragraph.

Mr. Facey and I both attended the Sharon conference; and while I must confess that I think he is manifestly unfair to Young Americans for Freedom, I, too, would like to see that organization devote more attention to domestic economic issues. But I would remind him first, that eight of the twelve principles of the Sharon Statement deal specifically with individual and economic liberty; and second, that Young Americans for Freedom is a political organization. While philosophically the hydra must be attacked *in toto*, politically it is necessary to cut off its heads, beginning with the most dangerous. To the conservative, the most dangerous is Communism.

To meet this threat, which has taken forms not previously seen in our history, the conservative supports the proposed Freedom Academy and the Un-American Activities Committee, though recognizing that the latter, like the courts, can restrict the freedom of some individuals. I do not suppose that Mr. Facey and I could agree on the value of laws proposed by this committee, or by anyone else, to prevent and punish sedition and subversion, but I believe he is radically misreading the hearings before that committee when he terms those it calls "peaceful." As to domestic politics, conservatives (including Young Americans for Freedom) do oppose federal aid to education, but they hold that if this aid is given as a defense measure — over their objections — it should at least be given to those who will defend the government which aids them. Moreover, on domestic issues conservatives and libertarians in Congress have some power to block the Administration's programs; they have much less in foreign policy and consequently much greater public pressure is necessary as a tactical matter to prevent the Administration from making mistakes which conservatives would consider disastrous to freedom.

In short, then, conservatives invite Mr. Facey to join them in fighting the great external threat to all our liberties, as they will join him in fighting the great internal threat.

JOHN WEICHER

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COMMUNICATION

Freedom and Coercion: Some Comments and Mr. Hamowy's Criticism

F. A. HAYEK

IN HIS REVIEW OF *The Constitution of Liberty*[1] Mr. Hamowy has raised points which are both important and difficult. In the space available I cannot attempt a complete answer but must concentrate on the chief problems. Before I turn to these I must, however, clear up a misunderstanding.

It was not the main thesis of my book that "freedom may be defined as the absence of coercion." Rather, as the first sentence of the first chapter explains, its primary concern is "the condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as is possible in society." I believe I am etymologically correct in describing such a state as one of liberty or freedom. But this is a secondary issue. The reduction of coercion appears to me an objective of the first importance in its own right and it is to this task that the book addresses itself.

I sympathize with Mr. Hamowy's disappointment about my admission that I know of no way of preventing coercion altogether and that all we can hope to achieve is to minimize it or rather its harmful effects. The sad fact is that nobody has yet found a way in which the former can be achieved by deliberate action. Such a happy state of perfect freedom (as I should call it) might conceivably be attained in a society whose members strictly observed a moral code prohibiting all coercion. Until we know how we can produce such a state all we can hope is to create conditions in which people are prevented from coercing each other. But to prevent people from coercing others is to coerce them. This means that coercion can only be reduced or made less harmful but not entirely eliminated. How far we can reduce it depends in part on circumstances which are not in the control of that organ of deliberate action which we call government. It is at least possible (to mention an extreme case which is the cause of one of Mr. Hamowy's chief complaints) that the use of so severe a form of coercion as conscription may be necessary to ward off the danger of worse coercion by an external enemy. I believe that the Swiss owe a long period of unusual freedom precisely to the fact that they recognized this and acted upon it; while some other countries protected by the sea were not under this unfortunate necessity. Where it exists the closest possible approach to perfect freedom may be much further from the ideal and yet the closest which can be achieved.

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[1] *New Individualist Review*, April, 1961, pp. 28-31.

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THE TWO CRUCIAL issues which Mr. Hamowy raises concern, however, the definition of coercion and the practical means of limiting it. On the first his objections rest on a misunderstanding for which my exposition is perhaps partly responsible. I certainly did not intend to represent as coercion *every* change in a person's environment brought about by another with the intention of inducing the first to take some action beneficial to the second. Though both the possibility for the coercer to foresee the action of the coerced, and the former's desire to bring about this action, are necessary conditions for coercion, they are not sufficient. To constitute coercion it is also necessary that the action of the coercer should put the coerced in a position which he regards as worse than that in which he would have been without that action. (That was the meaning of the repeated emphasis in my book on the threatened harm.) Surely no change in the environment of a person which merely adds to his previously existing range of opportunities an additional one can without violence to language be called coercion. However certain I may be that somebody will be glad to buy from me a commodity if I offer it to him at a certain price, and however much I may gain from the sale, it would be ridiculous to suggest that I have coerced him by an offer which he regards as a clear advantage.

Normally, therefore, the terms on which somebody is prepared to render me services cannot be regarded as coercion: however important the service in question may be to me, so long as his action adds to the range of my choice something which I desire and which without his action would not be available to me, he places me in a better position than that in which I would be without his action — however high the price he makes me pay.

There seem to me, however, to exist cases which are superficially similar yet have to be judged differently, though the exact distinction may be difficult to state. The instance I discuss in my book is the situation in which somebody has acquired control of the whole water supply of an oasis and used this position to exact unusual performances from those whose life depends on access to that water. Other instances of the same kind would be the only doctor available to perform an urgent life-saving operation and similar cases of rescue in an emergency where special unforeseeable circumstances have placed into a single hand the power of rescue from grave danger. They are all instances where I should wish that those in whose hands the life of another is placed should be under a moral and legal obligation to render the help in their power even if they cannot expect any remuneration — though they should of course be entitled to normal remuneration if it is in the power of the rescued. It is because these services are regarded as rights to be counted upon that a refusal to render them except on unusual terms is justly regarded as a harmful alteration of the environment and therefore as coercion. That in such instances the unlimited control of the owner over his property has to give way is good old libertarian doctrine: see David Hume's discussion of the lapse of the rationale of property under the conditions of absolute scarcity in a state of siege.

THE SECOND CHIEF issue on which Mr. Hamowy dissents is the practical one of the manner in which the power of coercive action by government can be so limited as to be least harmful. Since government needs this power to prevent coercion (and fraud and violence) by individuals, it might at first seem as if the test should be whether it is in the particular instance necessary for that purpose. But to make necessity for the prevention of worse coercion the criterion would inevitably make the decision dependent on somebody's discretion and thereby open the doors to what has long been recognized as one of the most harmful and obnoxious forms of coercion, that dependent on some other man's opinion. While we want to allow coercion by government only in situations where it is necessary to prevent coercion (or violence, etc.) by others, we do not want to allow it in all instances where it could be pretended that it was necessary for that purpose. We need there-

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fore another test to make the use of coercion independent of individual will. It is the distinguishing mark of the Western political tradition that for this purpose coercion has been confined to instances where it is required by general abstract rules, known beforehand and equally applicable to all. It is true that this by itself would not confine coercion to instances where it is necessary to prevent worse coercion; it leaves open possibilities of enforcement of highly oppressive rules on some dissenting group, especially in the field of religious observance and perhaps also in such restrictions on consumption as Prohibition — though it is very questionable whether the latter kind of restriction would ever be imposed if they had to take the form of general rules from which no exceptions could be granted. Yet combined with the requirement that such general rules authorizing coercion could be justified only by the general purpose of preventing worse coercion, etc., this principle seems to be as effective a method of minimizing coercion as mankind has yet discovered. It certainly seems to me the best protection yet devised against that administrative despotism which is the greatest danger to individual liberty today.

A SUMMER SCHOOL FOR LIBERTARIAN-CONSERVATIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS . . .

. . . will be held in New York City during the months of July and August. Lectures by noted speakers and discussion courses and seminars in economics, political theory, current affairs, history and philosophy will be offered.

The summer school will be conducted in up to eight sections of one week each. Tuition will be approximately $10 a week.

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Prospective students should write to Education Department, NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW, P.O. Box 4309, Chicago 80, Illinois, stating their background, dates they would want to attend and courses they would like to see offered. Although the summer school will be primarily for college students a few high school students may be considered.

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BOOK REVIEW:

The Moulding of Communists, by Frank S. Meyer, (Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1961), 214 pp. $5.00.

Seldom does a book appear telling us what it is like to be a Communist. We have had a few biographies, most eloquently Whittaker Chambers' *Witness,* which, unfortunately, became a classic before most of the present student generation began to read; *Darkness at Noon;* the stories of some of the counterspies—Herbert Philbrick, Matt Cvetic — and some of the Soviet defectors, such as Victor Kravchenko. But the emphasis, especially in recent writing, has been on the ism, on the theory, the strategy or the conspiracy, and not on the man. Of the seven books in the Fund for the Republic's series on Communism in American Life, Frank S. Meyer's *The Moulding of Communists* is the first to treat specifically of the Communist as Communist, rather than as believer in Marxism or as worker in some specific subversive activity, for instance.

Unlike Chambers or Koestler, however, Meyer offers an *analysis* of how a Communist is made. Drawing upon his experience of 15 years in the Communist party, he abstracts the basic elements from the individual cases to present a systematic explanation of the process, in both its theory and practice. It is an infinitely painstaking process, from the recruitment of carefully-chosen specific individuals, through the development of the ideal Communist by intensive training, criticism and discipline. No other political, religious or military institution in Western experience has ever carried out such a continuous forced re-shaping of the personality and philosophy of the individual member. "The emphasis on development and training continues with greater rather than less emphasis in the higher levels of the movement . . . certainly I have found it as high as in National Secretaries of the Western Communist Parties — Browder, Pollitt, Thorez, Pieck . . ."

"The primary elements of the methodology of the Communist training process, then, are these: uncompromising insistence on the scientific character of reality, combined with continuing stress on responsibility, in a milieu where life is training and training is life. But a further element is necessary to fuse the others together." That element is pressure. Three chapters of the book specifically discuss the forms of pressure brought to bear upon the individual Party member. Training of the cadre, the inner core of elite "Communists in the full sense" of the book's title, differs from that of the rank-and-file member largely in that, at the cadre level, the pressure is self-imposed.

The pressure is applied in every conceivable situation; the Communist Party counts each small point as critical. "An 'error' in work is immediately assigned to 'theoretical weakness'; or a difference of opinion on even a comparatively minor organizational or technical question is debated with constant appeals to high theoretical principles." Meyer tells of the national Organizational Secretary of the French Young Communist League, whose "infuriatingly bureaucratic attitude" over a housing problem at an international anti-war conference led within six months to his expulsion from the French Party for "holding a semi-Trotskyist position on the allies of the proletariat." Incidents such as this, occurring continually on every level of party activity, and forcing all deviations from Marxism-Leninism into the open where they can be destroyed, mould the cadre. The description of the process forcefully brings home to the reader the nature of Communism as studies of theory or strategy cannot.

Meyer is admittedly less successful in explaining the role of theory in the day-to-day life of the Communist. He speaks

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of the concept of "unity of theory and practice" as central to Communism: "theory is not reducible to practice, but indissolubly united with it in a relationship where neither exists without the other, where each determines the other, permitting independent validity neither to abstract theory nor to empirical practice. It is a strange marriage of rationalism and empiricism, this unity of theory and practice which forms the intellectual mode of existence of the Communist." "But the unity of theory and practice enables the Communist to identify every act of the organization, even the most wanton exercise of authority over himself, as a necessity of History. His theoretical outlook enables him to 'recognize' that necessity. To recognize it is to be free. And this is not a matter of verbal gymnastics. It is simply the closest I can get to expressing in explicit terms the inner rationale which makes it possible for a feeling of independence and the actuality of subservience to exist side by side."

For a better description of this concept, which Meyer terms "mystical," we must turn to the imaginative writers. But for an unemotional explanation of the Communizing process and description of the Communist, with notes so full as to constitute a bibliography on the subject, *The Moulding of Communists* is unequalled. It is basic to any serious study of Communism.

JOHN WEICHER

NEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES

THE FOLLOWING IS A SELECT LIST OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE EDITORS, MAY BE OF INTEREST TO OUR READERS.

Israel Kirzner, *The Economic Point of View,* (Van Nostrand, Princeton), 228 pp. $5.50.

Thomas Molnar (introduced by Russell Kirk), *The Future of Education,* (Fleet Press, New York).

Karl Brandt, "The Hard Core of the Farm Problem," *The Freeman,* April, 1961. (Free copy available from the publishers on request. Write: Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York.)

Ludwig von Mises, "On Equality and Inequality," *Modern Age,* Spring, 1961.

F. A. Hayek, "The *Non Sequitur* of the 'Dependence Effect'," *The Southern Economic Journal,* April, 1961.

George Reisman, "Galbraith's Modern Brand of Feudalism," *Human Events,* February 3, 1961.

Murray N. Rothbard, "Conservatism and Freedom: A Libertarian Comment," *Modern Age,* Spring, 1961.

John Weicher, "Inside Chicago Election Corruption," *Human Events,* February 24, 1961.

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" . . . The spearhead of this 'new radicalism' is an organization known as the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, which for seven years has preached the philosophy of freedom on college campuses . . . it will take the continuing effort of its adherents to demonstrate that the object of conservatism is solely to extend the area of individual freedom and arrest the spread of socialism. The ISI offers an outstanding example of how the job is done . . . "

—The Arizona Republic

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